FIRST COMICS
WARP SPECIAL
JAN. $1.00
NO. 2
$1.25 CANADA
LORD CUMULUS
VS. SARGON
MISTRESS OF WAR!
SILVESTRI
PATTERSON 83
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FIRST™ NOTES

49 MILLION MILES AND 10,000 YEARS!

This month, First Comics launches its most ambitious new title yet — **Mars!**

Instead of pseudo-science fiction concepts (which, admittedly, we enjoy as much as the next comics fan) and vengence-seeking, costumed, mutated humanoids (which we likewise enjoy), **Mars** is the story of one woman, a scientist crippled in a horrible accident which took the life of her father. Resolved to take on her father's work, Morgana Trace moves to the lighter-gravity conditions of the moon, an environment where she once again can use her legs.

But her stay on the moon is shortened by a unique mission to Mars — a mission with the purpose of artificially restructuring the Red Planet, to bio-engineer it into a planet capable of supporting human life.

The Mars mission crew continues with its scientific work until, one day, all contact with the planet Earth is abruptly and completely cut off ... and the Mars crew is forced to begin 10,000 years of suspended animation!

When she awakes, Morgana finds herself *alone* on the starship — her fellow crew members having mysteriously disappeared. Bereft of all provisions, her only choice is to take her robot and land on the newly restructured planet.

But Morgana *isn't* alone on the planet Mars ... and what awaits on her new home is something more dangerous and more fascinating than the most cosmic menace usually found in "s-f" comics.

Mars is the creation of **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel,** whose work has graced (among other publications) many an issue of Heavy Metal and Epic Illustrated.

All of this science fiction action is to be found underneath a *full-color* cover by Wheatley and Hempel.

One thing's for sure — you've never before seen a comic book like **Mars.**

ARTIST-GO-ROUND

Thought you might like to be kept abreast of a couple of changes in the First Comics line-up.

Last month, **Leslie Zahler** took over as **American Flagg!** colorist. Everything else remains the same — **Howard Chaykin's** writing and drawing and **Ken Bruzenak's** lettering.

(By the way, I should point out that I've never before seen so much mail directed to the letterer of a comic book — but that's what's been happening on **American Flagg!** Ken Bruzenak has been doing such a knock-out job we could fill an entire letters page, and then some, strictly with LOC's praising Ken. Nice going, K.B!)

Next month, **Bruce Patterson** is inking **Lenin Delsol's** final **Starslayer** story. The following month — in issue #14 — **Timothy Truman** will be taking over the pencil / inking chores on both **Starslayer** and **Grimjack.** Tim's work on Grimjack (in the back of **Starslayer**) has generated a great deal of positive fan mail even at this early date.

And, since the whole **Starslayer** crew arrives on Cynosure that month, don't be too surprised if you happen across a booklength Starslayer/Grimjack story before too long.

Lenin's not hurting for work, though, because he's taken over the pencils *and* inks on the new Outrider feature in **Warp,** starting in **Warp** #11.

Joe Staton had so much fun writing **E-Man** #9 that he's plotting next month's issue — #11 — and taking over as writer full-time with the following issue! Expect the return of super-villainess Tyger Lili before too long.

Of course, **Jerry Bingham** takes over the pencils on **Warp** with next month's issue (we're doing our second **Warp Special** this month), our first post-adaptation issue. **Peter Gillis** and **Mike Gustovich** continue on as writer and inker, respectively.

— Mike Gold

ON SALE NOW

Mars #1: Here it all begins! Classic science fiction, as never before seen on the comics page! Meet Morgana Trace, a young scientist who's amazing adventures take her from Earth to the Moon to Mars, from the near-present day to a time 10,000 years in the future. Created, written and drawn by **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel.**

American Flagg! #4: O.K., there's this illegal basketball team, you see, that's playing in Havana, and Flagg has figured out the link between basketball and the subliminal messages planted within the Bob Violence show. If you haven't discovered why **Howard Chaykin's** monthly has become the most talked-about new book of the year ... don't say we didn't warn you!

Jon Sable, Freelance #8: If you think a run-of-the-mill resort-town safe robbery is going to turn into anything less than an international attempt at nuclear blackmail, you haven't been reading **Mike Grell's Jon Sable, Freelance** the past six months. Which is too bad ... 'cuz the early issues are commanding top-dollar on the back issue market!

ALSO FIRST IN SEPTEMBER

Starslayer #12: On their way to Cynosure, Tamara gets kidnapped and Torin and Crayne get caught up in the wildest car chase in comics history! Plus: the first chapter in the latest **Grimjack** thriller ..., "Buried Past!" Both written by **John Ostrander; Starslayer** is drawn by **Lenin Delsol** and **Mike Gustovich,** Grimjack by **Timothy Gruman.**

E-Man #10: Boy, we don't know which one's weirder — the all-powerful menace of Black Lung ... or the long-awaited secret of Nova Kane! Either way, **E-Man** is in for a real strange time. Plotted by **Marty Pasko,** dialogued by **Paul Kupperberg,** pencilled by **Joe Staton** and inked by **Rick Burchett.**

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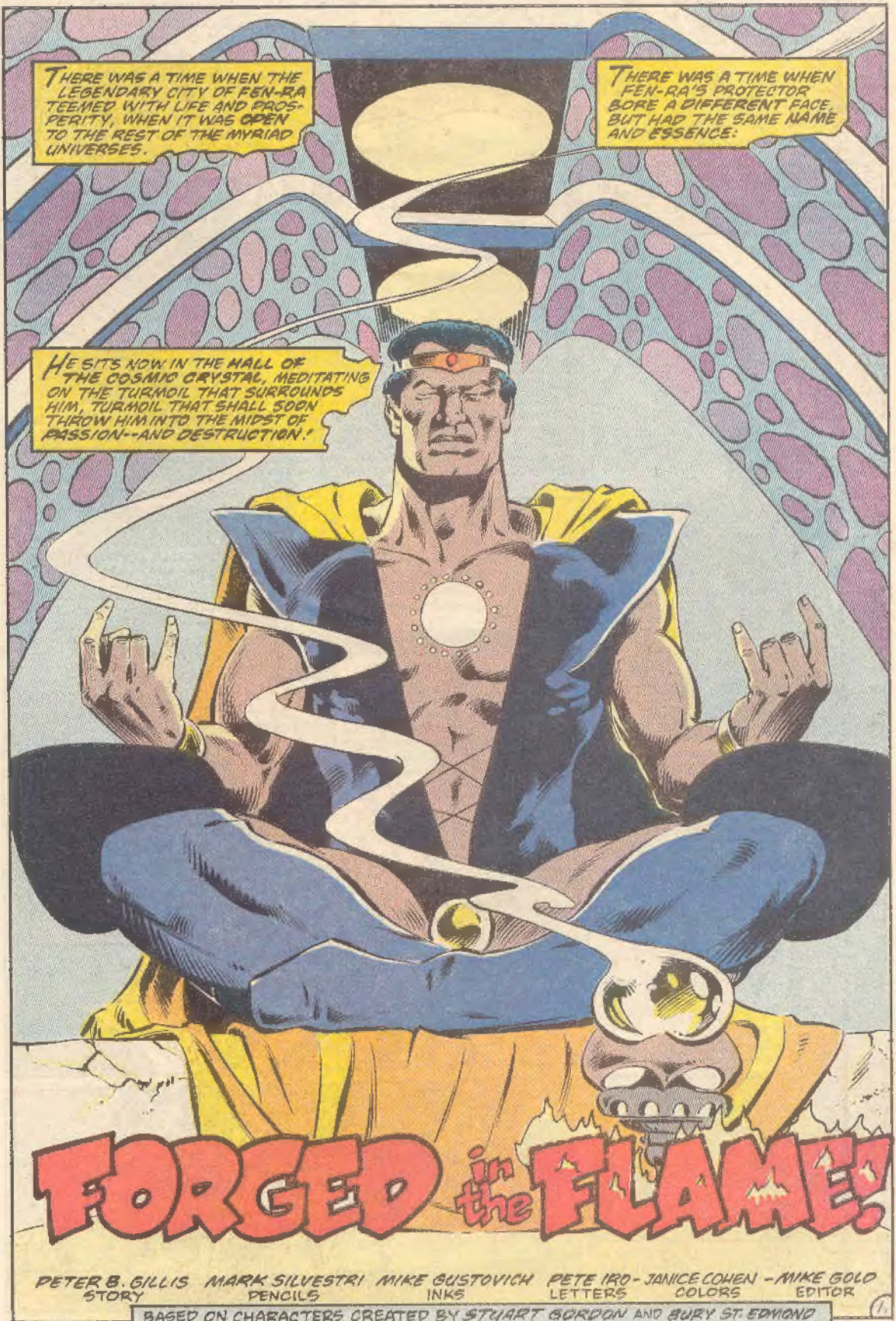


PETER B. GILLIS STORY
MARK SILVESTRI PENCILS
MIKE GUSTOVICH INKS
PETE IRO- LETTERS
JANICE COHEN - COLORS
MIKE GOLD EDITOR

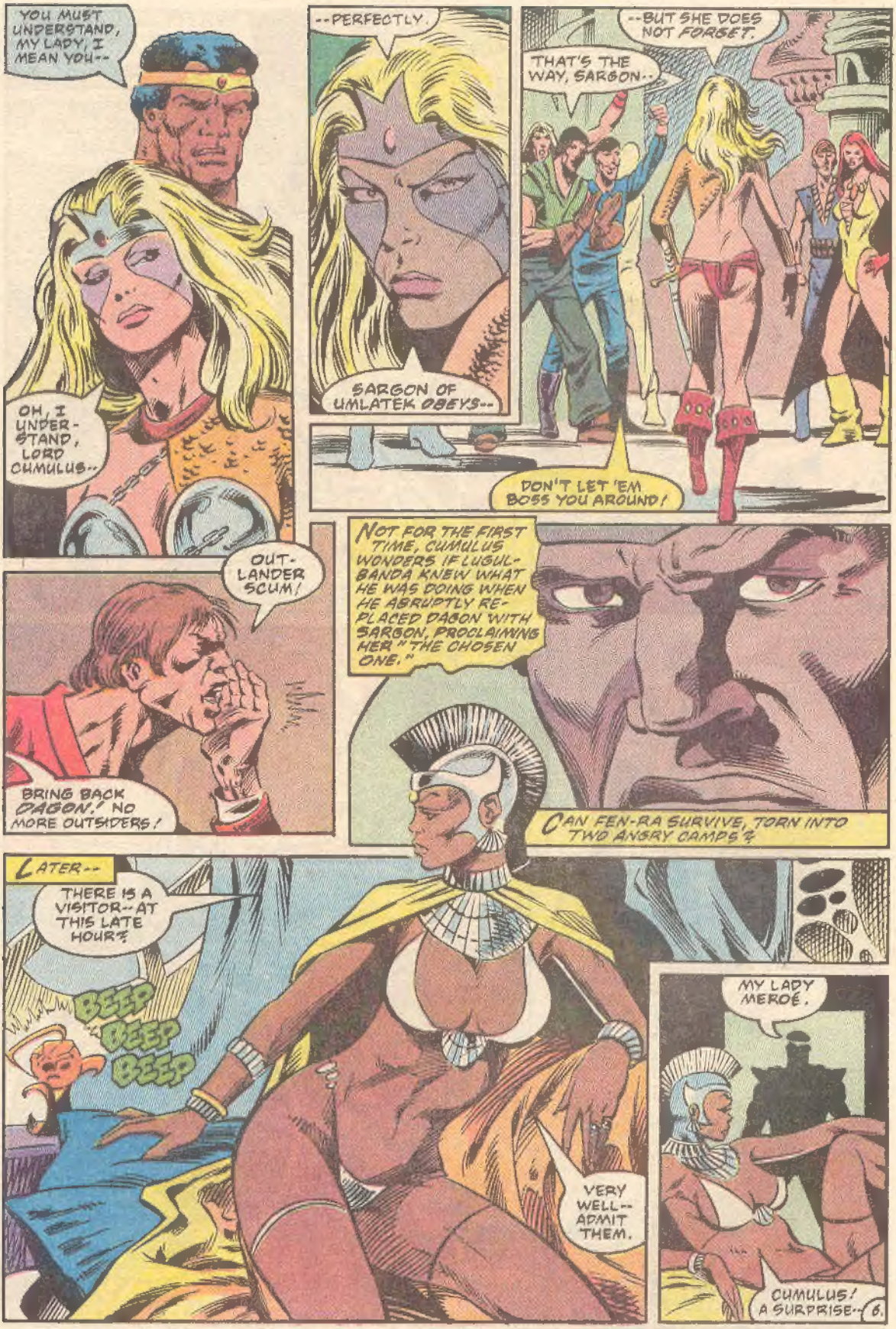
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMOND

WITHIN THE LIGHT OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL, HE KNOWS, LIE THE ULTIMATE SECRETS OF HIS ORIGIN.
THOUGH THEY MUST REMAIN A MYSTERY, THEY ARE SOOTHING TO CONTEMPLATE.
DUE TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE WIZARD LWOULBANDA, LORD CUMULUS WAS CALLED AWAY FROM HIS DUTIES AS GUARDIAN OF THE PANDIMENSIONAL CITY OF CYNDYURE, TO ADMINISTER FEN-RA.
HE HAS NEEDED THESE INTERLUDES SINCE THEN.
BUT A CLAMOR ARISES OUTSIDE--
--SHATTERING HIS SERENITY.
FEN-RA IS A CITY OF POWER HIGH-SPIRITED NOBLES VIE FOR IT, SCHEMERS PLOT FOR IT, BROKERS TRADE ON IT--
--AND CUMULUS IS SICK OF IT!
"AND THAT IS WHY," LWOULBANDA WOULD PROBABLY SAY, "I'VE GIVEN IT TO YOU."
OH, WELL.
7

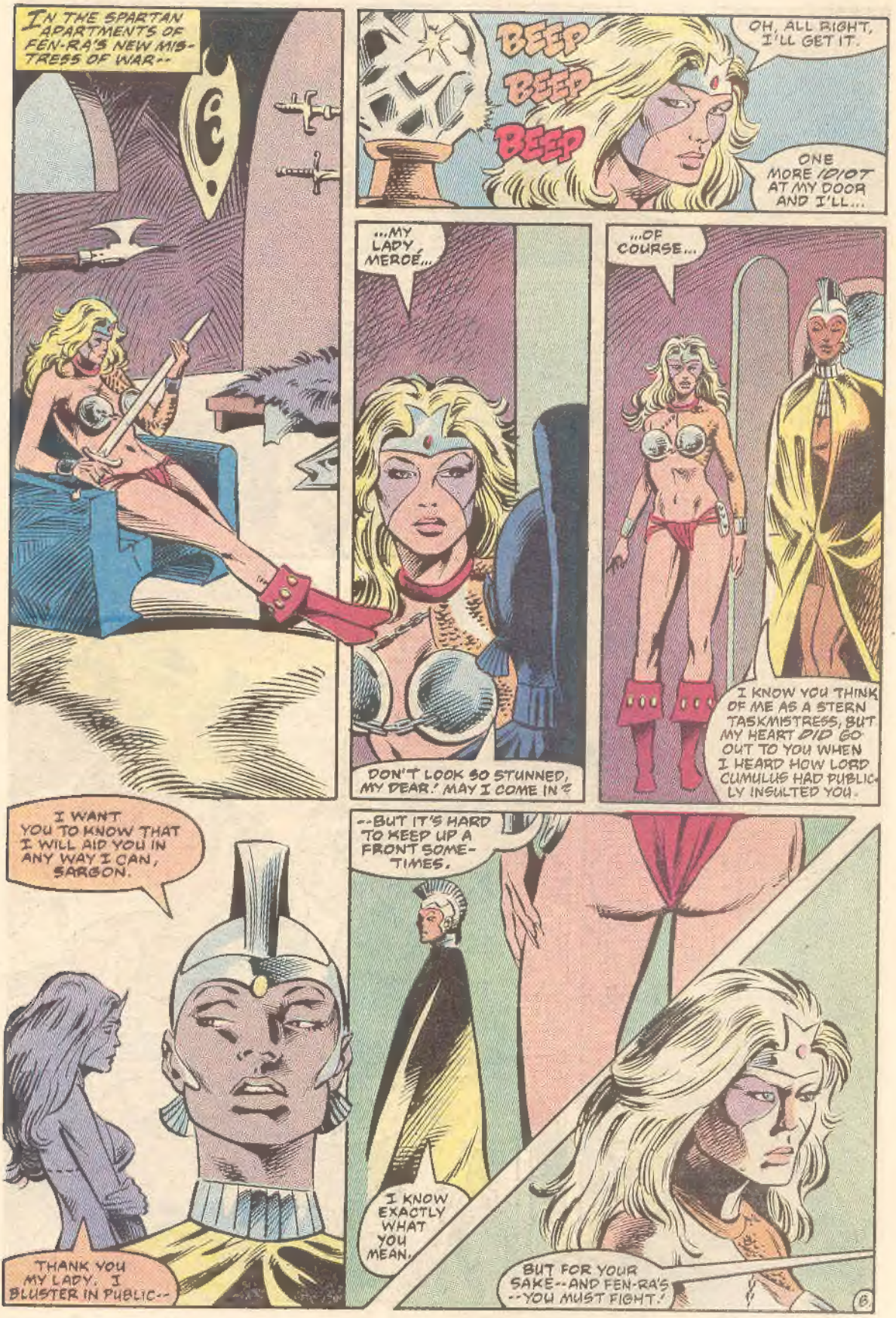
HE THROWS OPEN THE DOORS TO THE GREAT SQUARE--
--AND HIS TEMPER FLARES!
BY THE MOTHER STAR--!
NOT THEM AGAIN!
THIS TIME YOU'LL PAY FOR YOUR INSULT IN BLOOD, DAGON!
INSULT, SARGON? I CALLED YOU A CHEAP OUT-LANDER WHORE! WHAT'S INSULTING ABOUT MERE FACT?
I AM FEN-RA'S MISTRESS OF WAR, DAGON! AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN WHY!
I GET IT! YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW WHO YOU SLEPT WITH--
--TO TAKE OVER MY JOB.
GODS OF FEN-RA, YOU SHALL PAY FOR THAT!
GO AHEAD AND TRY IT, DAGON!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
3

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? I SAID--
THAT'S ENOUGH!!
CHOOOMM!
THE LAW OF FEN-RA FORBIDS THAT WEAPONS BE UNSHEATHED AGAINST A FELLOW NOBLE!
AND AS FEN-RA'S PROTECTOR, I SHALL SEE THE LAWS ARE KEPT!
YOUR PARDON, MY LORD. YOUR WORD IS THE LAW OF FEN-RA.
I SHALL NOT DISPUTE IT.
THAT IS WISE, GOOD DAGON.
4

GOOD DAGON!? YOU INTERRUPT A SACRED BATTLE OF HONOR, HUMILIATE ME IN FRONT OF ALL FEN-RA, AND WHEN THAT SCUM TOADIES UP TO YOU, YOU CALL HIM GOOD DAGON!?
GIRL--HAVEN'T YOU HEARD OF IRONY?
AND NOW IT'S GIRL! THE OTHERS MIGHT JUMP AT YOUR EVERY WORD, BUT I SEE NO REASON WHY YOU SHOULD COMMAND ANYTHING BUT MY HATRED!
YOU ARE NEW TO THE WAYS OF FEN-RA--MY LADY--
--BUT THE WORD OF LORD CUMULUS IS NOT TO BE GAINSAID.
I'LL GAIN-SAY YOU, YOU POMPOUS BLACK--
THE LAW SAYS NO WEAPON IS TO BE RAISED.
AND SINCE YOU WILL NOT OBEY VOLUNTARILY--
THUD
I'LL SEE TO IT THAT YOU CANNOT DISOBEY.
GODS--IT'S CRUSHING MY HAND!
THAT'S ALL I ASK MISTRESS SARGON.
DAMN YOU, CUMULUS--YOU WIN! I YIELD!
5.


YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, MY LADY, I MEAN YOU--
OH, I UNDERSTAND, LORD CUMULUS..
--PERFECTLY.
SARGON OF UMLATEK OBEYS--
--BUT SHE DOES NOT FORGET.
THAT'S THE WAY, SARGON--
DON'T LET 'EM BOSS YOU AROUND!
OUTLANDER SCUM!
BRING BACK DAGON!' NO MORE OUTSIDERS!
NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, CUMULUS WONDERS IF LUGULBANDA KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING WHEN HE ABRUPTLY REPLACED DAGON WITH SARGON, PROCLAIMING HER "THE CHOSEN ONE."
CAN FEN-RA SURVIVE, TORN INTO TWO ANGRY CAMPS?
LATER--
THERE IS A VISITOR--AT THIS LATE HOUR?
BEEP BEEP BEEP
VERY WELL--ADMIT THEM.
MY LADY MEROÉ.
CUMULUS! A SURPRISE--
6.

--AND A PLEASURE.
OK--NOW WHERE'S THE SURPRISE?
AHA! YOU ARE FAR TOO WICKED FOR A PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA, MY LORD.
BUT I ASSUME YOU HAVE OTHER INTERESTS TONIGHT THAN EXOTIC WORDPLAY--AM I RIGHT?
FRANKLY, MY LADY, IT'S OUR MISTRESS OF WAR--SARGON.
YES, LOVELY GIRL, IF HEADSTRONG. SHE STUDIED UNDER ME WHEN SHE WAS SENT HERE AS A CHILD FOR SCHOOLING.
BUT NOW HER APPOINTMENT HAS SPLIT FEN-RA RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE! DAGON AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE ENRAGED--AND IN TRUTH DAGON'S RECORD WAS WITHOUT A BLEMISH! BUT SARGON REFUSES TO BE TACTFUL ABOUT THE MATTER.
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
I CAN'T MEDIATE--I'M KNOWN AS DAGON'S OLD BATTLE COMPANION. BUT YOUR WISDOM AND FAIRNESS IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL.
VERY WELL. I WILL HELP--EVEN THOUGH I'M MAD AT YOU.
WHAT? WHY?
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'VE TURNED INTO A DECREPIT OLD MAID.
YOU ARE FOREVER AT CYNOSURE OR WHEREVER HAVING SPOILED ME COMPLETELY FOR THE COMMON RUN OF MEN.
EXACTLY. NOW KISS THIS WITHERED CHEEK AND GO.
MEROÉ--THANK YOU. I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU.


IN THE SPARTAN APARTMENTS OF FEN-RA'S NEW MISTRESS OF WAR--
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
OH, ALL RIGHT, I'LL GET IT.
ONE MORE IDIOT AT MY DOOR AND I'LL...
...MY LADY MEROE...
DON'T LOOK SO STUNNED, MY DEAR. MAY I COME IN?
...OF COURSE...
I KNOW YOU THINK OF ME AS A STERN TASKMISTRESS, BUT MY HEART DID GO OUT TO YOU WHEN I HEARD HOW LORD CUMULUS HAD PUBLICLY INSULTED YOU.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I WILL AID YOU IN ANY WAY I CAN, SARGON.
THANK YOU MY LADY. I BLUSTER IN PUBLIC--
--BUT IT'S HARD TO KEEP UP A FRONT SOMETIMES.
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN.
BUT FOR YOUR SAKE--AND FEN-RA'S --YOU MUST FIGHT!
8

ALMOST FINISHED!
LUGULBANDA FASHIONED HIS FACELESS ONES HERE N THE FORGE OF INFINITE FIRE--BUT I'M MAKING SOMETHING FAR GREATER!
AND I'M ALMOST THERE!
A GIANT REPLICA OF ME--WILL ANYONE EVER DOUBT ME AGAIN?
AND EVERY INCH OF HIM--TEMPERED BY THE DIMENSIONAL FLAMES OF THE FORGE!
FFWOOM
SOON IT WILL BE READY--READY TO DESTROY MY ENEMIES AND THE ENEMIES OF FEN-RA--AND I'LL BE MASTER OF WAR AGAIN--FOREVER!
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH. TOO MUCH.
WHAT? WHO? WHAT?

CUMULUS! YOU MUSTN'T STOP ME! FEN-RA IS IN DEADLY DANGER..!
I KNOW. FROM YOU, DAGON-- YOU NEED A REST. A LONG ONE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU'D LIKE, ISN'T IT? TRUCK OLD DAGON OFF SOMEWHERE- GIVE HIM A POST WHERE HE CAN'T DO ANY HARM BECAUSE HE'S GONE PARANOID
AND ALL THIS BECAUSE I'VE DISCOVERED TRAITORS IN FEN-RA TRAITORS ALL THE WAY UP TO THE HIGHEST CIRCLES!
AT FIRST I FEARED YOU WERE MAD MY FRIEND--NOW I HOPE YOU ARE!
THOSE ARE DANGEROUS ACCUSATIONS!
OLD DAGON-- THE RAVING LUNATIC! EVEN YOU THINK THAT --DON'T YOU? DON'T YOU??
DAMN RIGHT THEY'RE DANGEROUS-- LOST ME MY JOB--
I CONCUR. DAGON MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU KNOW
I REPEAT: YOU NEED A REST
IT IS TIME

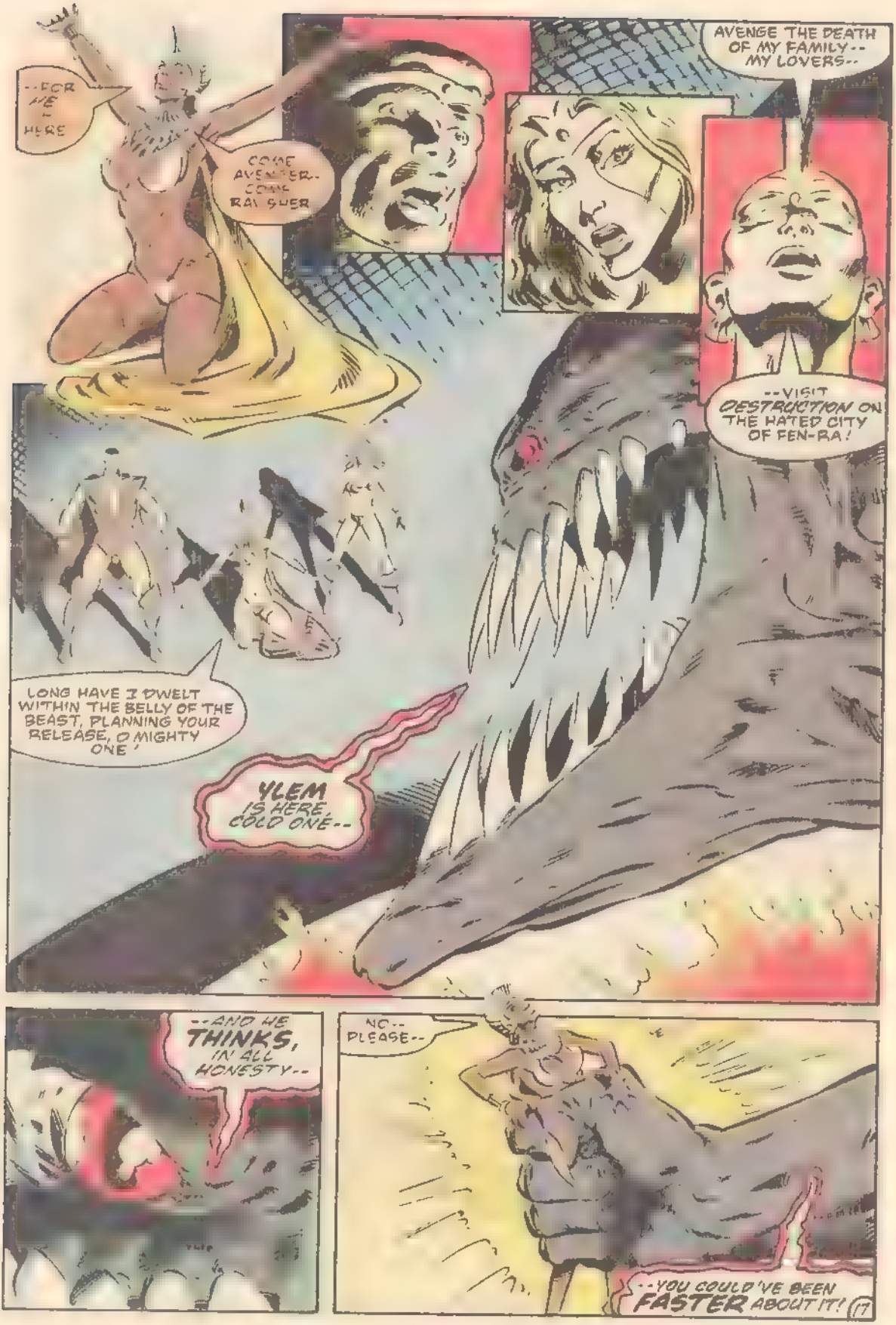
DAGON, OLD FRIEND--WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT IT IS YOU'VE LEARNED. I PROMISE I'LL LOOK INTO IT--
MY LADY SARGON--IF YOU LOVE FEN-RA, YOU WILL COME WITH ME--NOW.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
THE CATACOMBS--! THEN SOME MENACE IS INVADING US FROM BELOW?
WORSE THAN THAT. COME
THE DOORS TO THE FORGE--OPEN! AND FACELESS ONES DE'OLISHED! THIS IS SACRILEGE! WHO WOULD DARE--?
YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE ME YOU MUST SEE FOR YOURSELF.
DAGON--AND CUMULUS! SKULKING IN FORB'IDDEN CHAMBERS PLOTTING THE DOWNFALL OF FEN-RA!
SARGON--I KNOW HOW THIS LOOKS--BUT I CAN EXPLAIN--
EXPLAIN NOTHING, TRAITORS!
HAVE AT YOU, CUMULUS!!

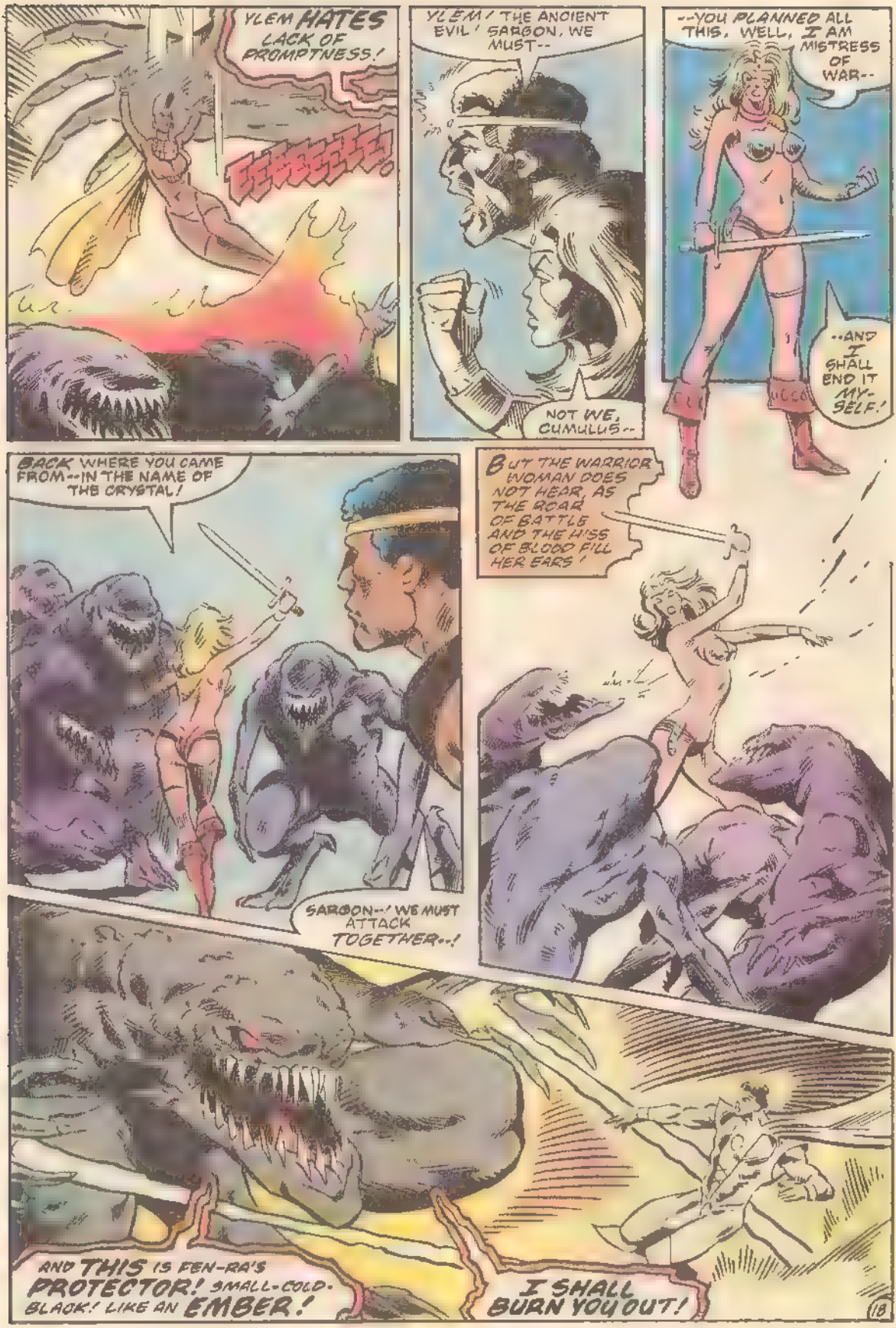
YOU KEEP AWAY FROM HER!
I'LL OUT HER WITH MY BARE HANDS!
NO!
THE HARLOT'S MINE! MINE TO DESTROY!
MEROE YOU!
SO IT SEEMS, LORD CUMULUS OUR OPPONENTS IN THIS BATTLE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN! I DON'T REGRET IT--
--SINCE YOU ARE THE TRUE POWER OF EVIL HERE IN FEN-RA!
FOR AN ACCUSATION SUCH AS THAT, SARGON--
--THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER!
UH-UH, LORD CUMULUS! NEVER TRY THE SAME TRICK TWICE!
TZANG!
NOT WHEN I CAN PARRY YOUR BEAM--

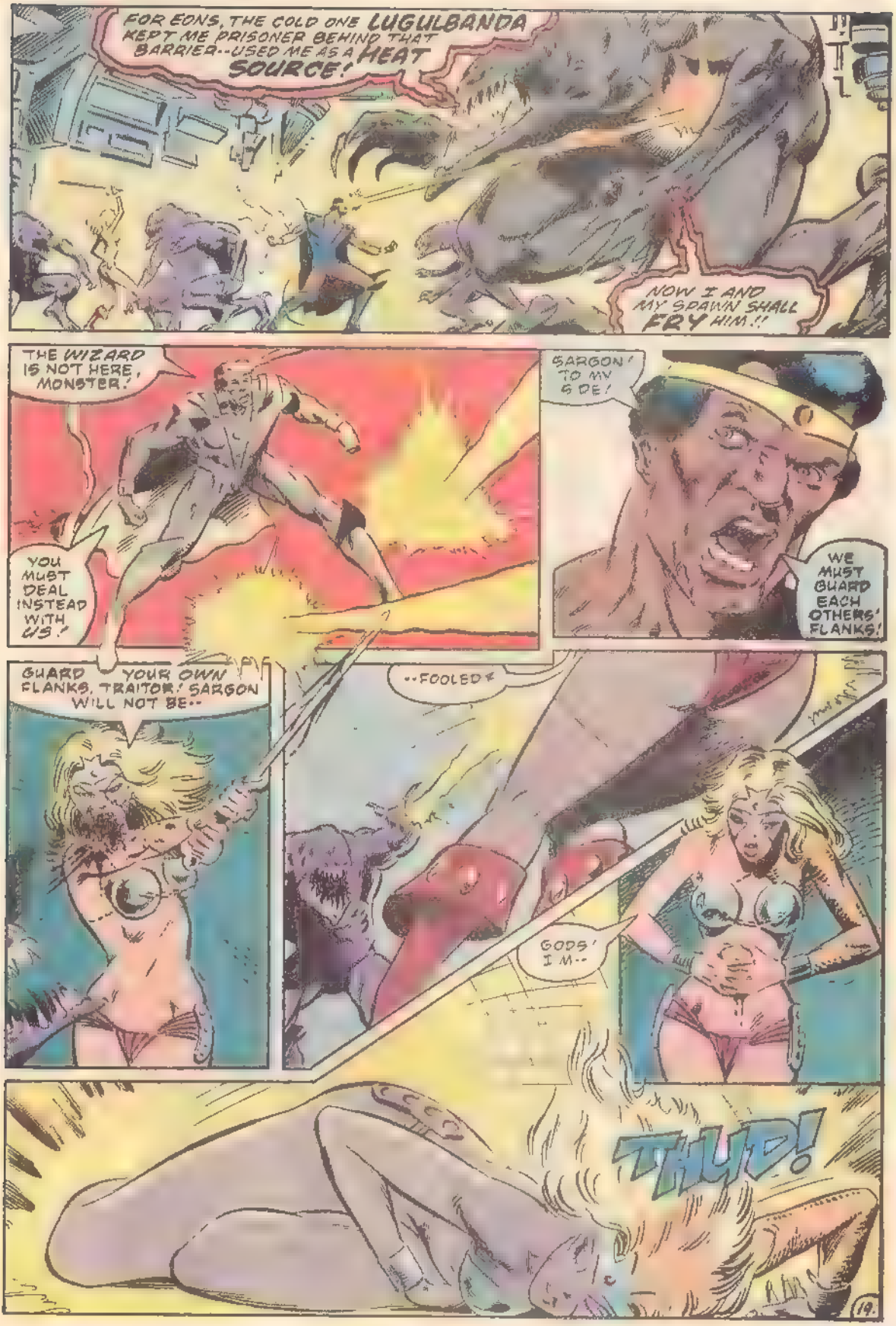
--AND TAKE THE FIGHT TO YOU!
GOOD!
I BELIEVE IN TREATING WOMEN AS EQUALS, TRAITOR!
CHAK
MY ROBOT! THIS IS THE JOB IT WAS MADE TO DO!
I CAN ACTIVATE IT MANUALLY..
--AND IT'LL DESTROY YOU ALL!
THEN YOU MUST BE PREVENTED MADMAN!
GET AWAY FROM THOSE CONTROLS, DAGON!
I KNEW IT! YOU'RE TERRIFIED OF ITS POWER
RIP
WELL, YOU'LL TASTE THAT POWER--
--IN A MATTER OF A FEW MINUTES!
A FEW MINUTES TO ACTIVATE THE MACHINE? THANK YOU!

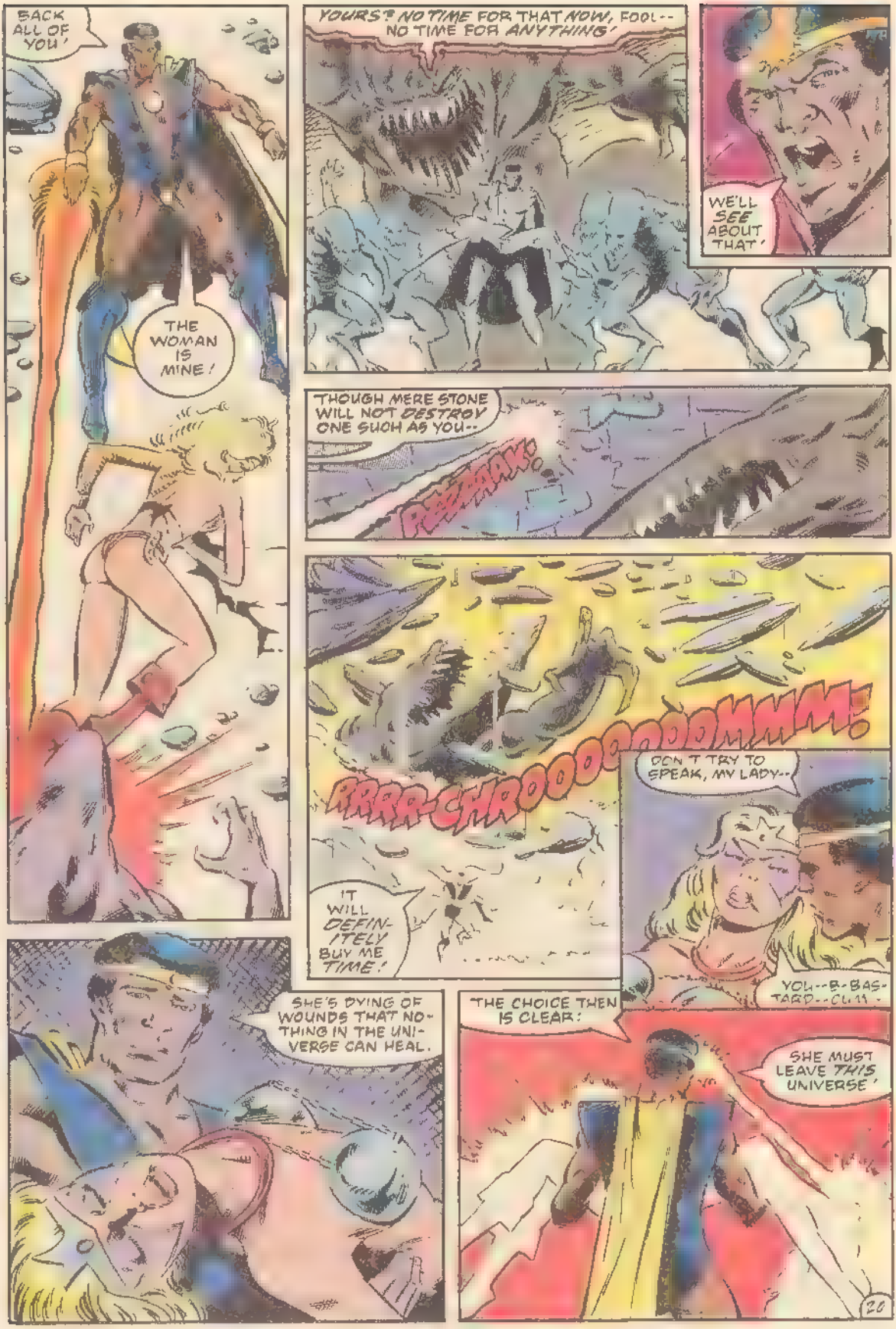
YOU'VE GIVEN ME ALL THE INFORMATION I NEED'
SORRY GOODBYE, DAGON
ZSRAKK
NO--!
NO!!
MEROÉ WAIT' COME BACK HERE--'
NOT INTO THE FLAAAME!!
I'M AFRAID SO
EEEEAAAAAAAAA
GODS OF PEN-RA'
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
EEEEE:

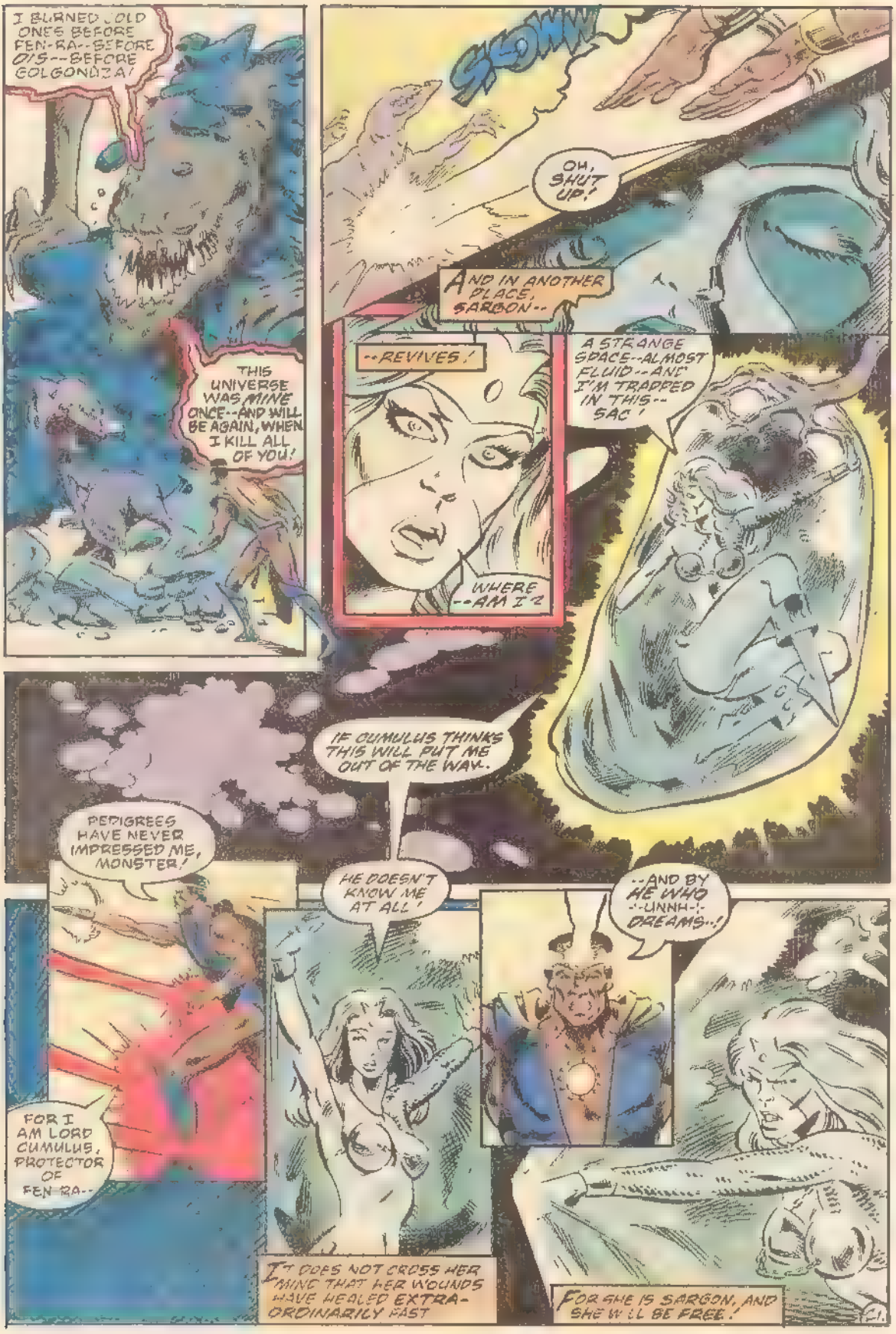
SHALL I EXPLAIN, SARGON? YOU MAY NOT KNOW THAT THE FORGE GETS ITS FLAME FROM A DIMENSION-AL-INTER-FACE--
BY THE CRYSTAL --NO, MEROE--
YES, OUMULUS--A BARRIER THE SORCERER LUGULBANDA SEALED IN EONS PAST--A PRISON DOOR--
KRROOOM
--WHICH I HAVE USED THE GREAT ENERGIES OF DAGON'S ROBOT TO SHATTER!
SAY YOUR PRAYERS, CHILDREN--
16

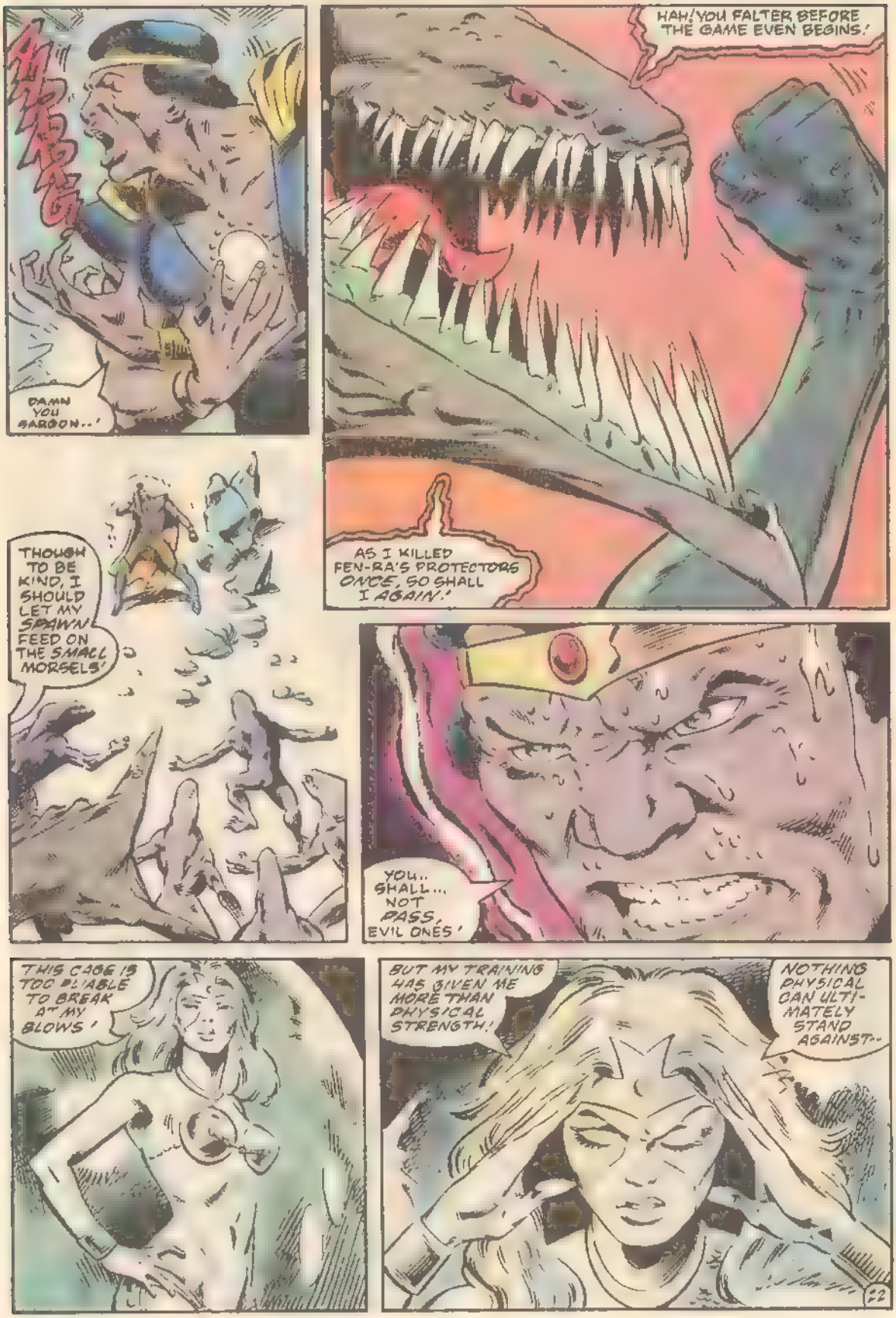

--FOR ME -- HERE
COME AVENGER.. COME RAISHER
AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY FAMILY-- MY LOVERS--
--VISIT DESTRUCTION ON THE HATED CITY OF FEN-RA!
LONG HAVE I DWELT WITHIN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST, PLANNING YOUR RELEASE, O MIGHTY ONE!
YLEM IS HERE, COLD ONE--
--AND HE THINKS, IN ALL HONESTY--
NO-- PLEASE--
--YOU COULD'VE BEEN FASTER ABOUT IT!


YLEM HATES LACK OF PROMPTNESS!
GEEEEE!
YLEM! THE ANCIENT EVIL! SARGON, WE MUST--
NOT WE, CUMULUS--
--YOU PLANNED ALL THIS, WELL, I AM MISTRESS OF WAR--
--AND I SHALL END IT MYSELF!
BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM--IN THE NAME OF THE CRYSTAL!
BUT THE WARRIOR WOMAN DOES NOT HEAR, AS THE ROAR OF BATTLE AND THE HISS OF BLOOD FILL HER EARS!
SARGON--! WE MUST ATTACK TOGETHER--!
AND THIS IS FEN-RA'S PROTECTOR! SMALL-COLD-BLACK! LIKE AN EMBER!
I SHALL BURN YOU OUT!


FOR EONS, THE COLD ONE LUGULBANDA KEPT ME PRISONER BEHIND THAT BARRIER--USED ME AS A HEAT SOURCE!
NOW I AND MY SPAWN SHALL FRY HIM!!
THE WIZARD IS NOT HERE, MONSTER!
YOU MUST DEAL INSTEAD WITH US!
SARGON! TO MY S DE!
WE MUST GUARD EACH OTHERS' FLANKS!
GUARD YOUR OWN FLANKS, TRAITOR! SARGON WILL NOT BE--
--FOOLED!
GODS! I M--
THUD!
19.


BACK ALL OF YOU!
THE WOMAN IS MINE!
YOURS? NO TIME FOR THAT NOW, FOOL-- NO TIME FOR ANYTHING!
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!
THOUGH MERE STONE WILL NOT DESTROY ONE SUCH AS YOU--
PZZZAAAK!
RRRR-CHROOOOOOOOMMM!
IT WILL DEFINITELY BUY ME TIME!
DON'T TRY TO SPEAK, MY LADY--
YOU--B-BASTARD--CUM-
SHE'S DYING OF WOUNDS THAT NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE CAN HEAL.
THE CHOICE THEN IS CLEAR:
SHE MUST LEAVE THIS UNIVERSE!


I BURNED OLD ONES BEFORE FEN-RA--BEFORE O'S--BEFORE GOLGONDZA!
THIS UNIVERSE WAS MINE ONCE--AND WILL BE AGAIN, WHEN I KILL ALL OF YOU!
SLOWW
OH, SHUT UP!
AND IN ANOTHER PLACE, SARGON--
--REVIVES!
WHERE--AM I?
A STRANGE SPACE--ALMOST FLUID--AND I'M TRAPPED IN THIS--SAC!
IF CUMULUS THINKS THIS WILL PUT ME OUT OF THE WAY..
PEDIGREES HAVE NEVER IMPRESSED ME, MONSTER!
HE DOESN'T KNOW ME AT ALL!
--AND BY HE WHO -!-UNNH-!- DREAMS..!
FOR I AM LORD CUMULUS, PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA--
IT DOES NOT CROSS HER MIND THAT HER WOUNDS HAVE HEALED EXTRA-ORDINARILY FAST
FOR SHE IS SARGON, AND SHE WILL BE FREE!

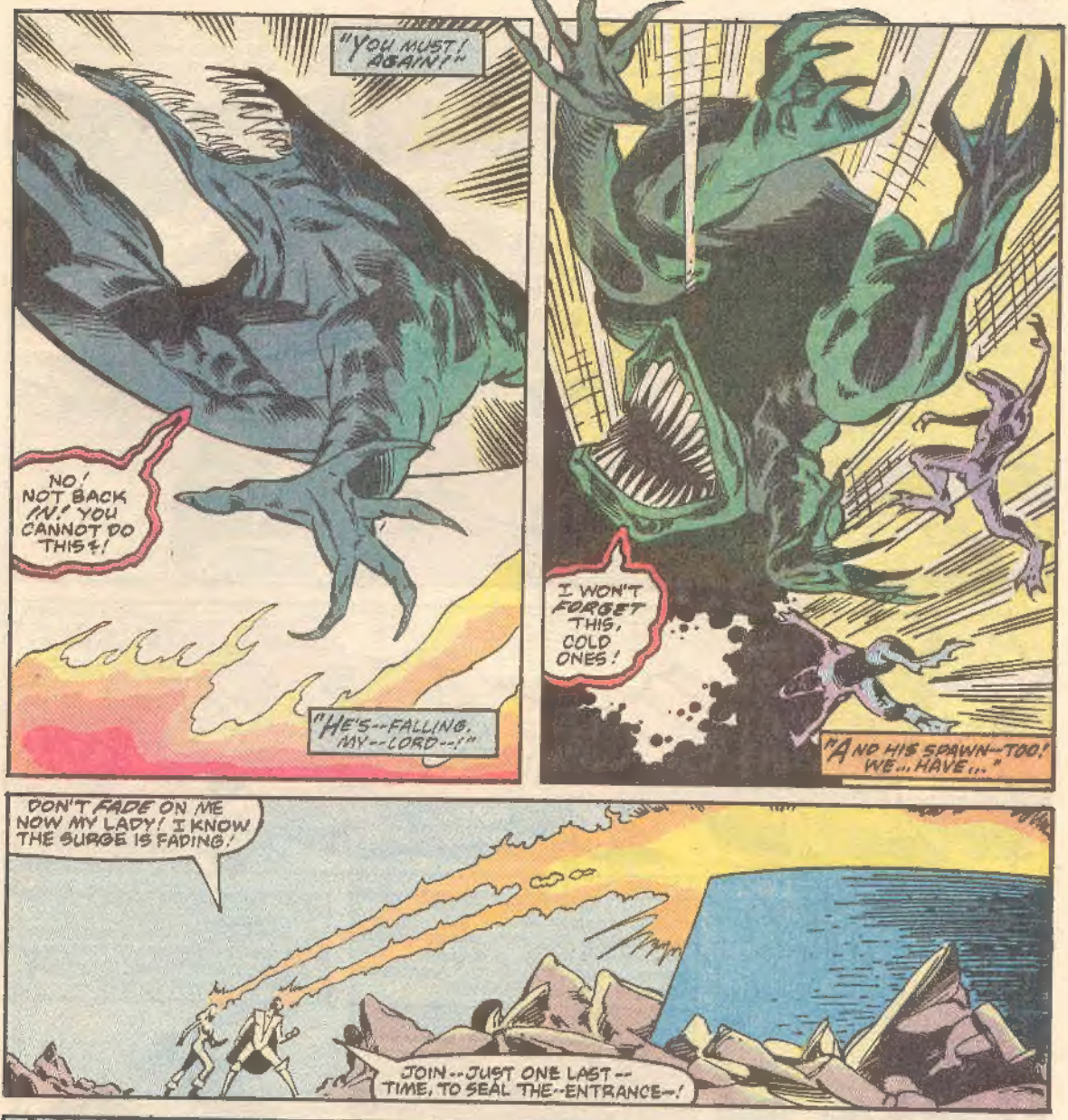

DAMN YOU BARBOON..!
HAH! YOU FALTER BEFORE THE GAME EVEN BEGINS!
AS I KILLED FEN-RA'S PROTECTORS ONCE, SO SHALL I AGAIN!
THOUGH TO BE KIND, I SHOULD LET MY SPAWN FEED ON THE SMALL MORSELS!
YOU.. SHALL... NOT PASS, EVIL ONES!
THIS CAGE IS TOO PLIABLE TO BREAK AT MY BLOWS!
BUT MY TRAINING HAS GIVEN ME MORE THAN PHYSICAL STRENGTH!
NOTHING PHYSICAL CAN ULTIMATELY STAND AGAINST..
22

--THE MIND!
IT'S WORKING! THE BARRIER IS RUPTURING!
NOOOOO....
HE IS DOWN, CHILDREN! EAT--PLAY--DO WHAT YOU WILL WITH HIM!
HAVE A GOOD TIME!
COME NO FURTHER, HELLSPAWN--
FEN-RA STILL STANDS PROTECTED!
YOU CANNOT STAND AGAINST ME!
23.

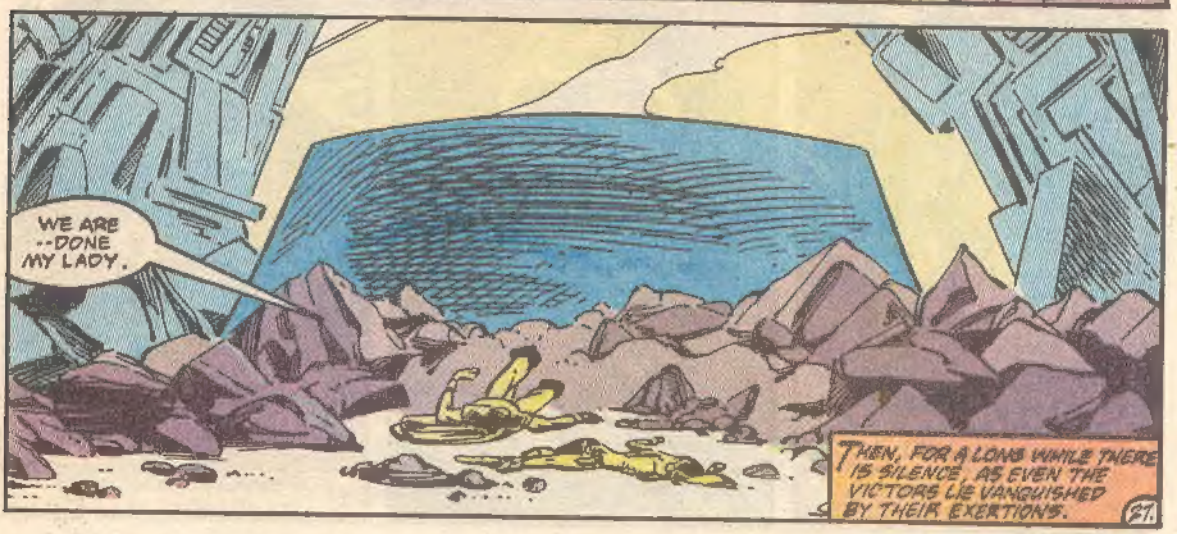
THAT'S IT--SCURRY LIKE VERMIN WHILE I USE THESE SECONDS TO--
--ARM MYSELF AND--
SARGON, YOU NEED--
--YOU'RE HURT!
CUMULUS!
CUMULUS, WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
--HELP--
YOU! WHY YOU--
I MUST ENTER YOU!
AND SUDDENLY--
MY LADY, THIS GOES AGAINST ALL MY VOWS-- BUT THERE'S NO TIME!
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND!

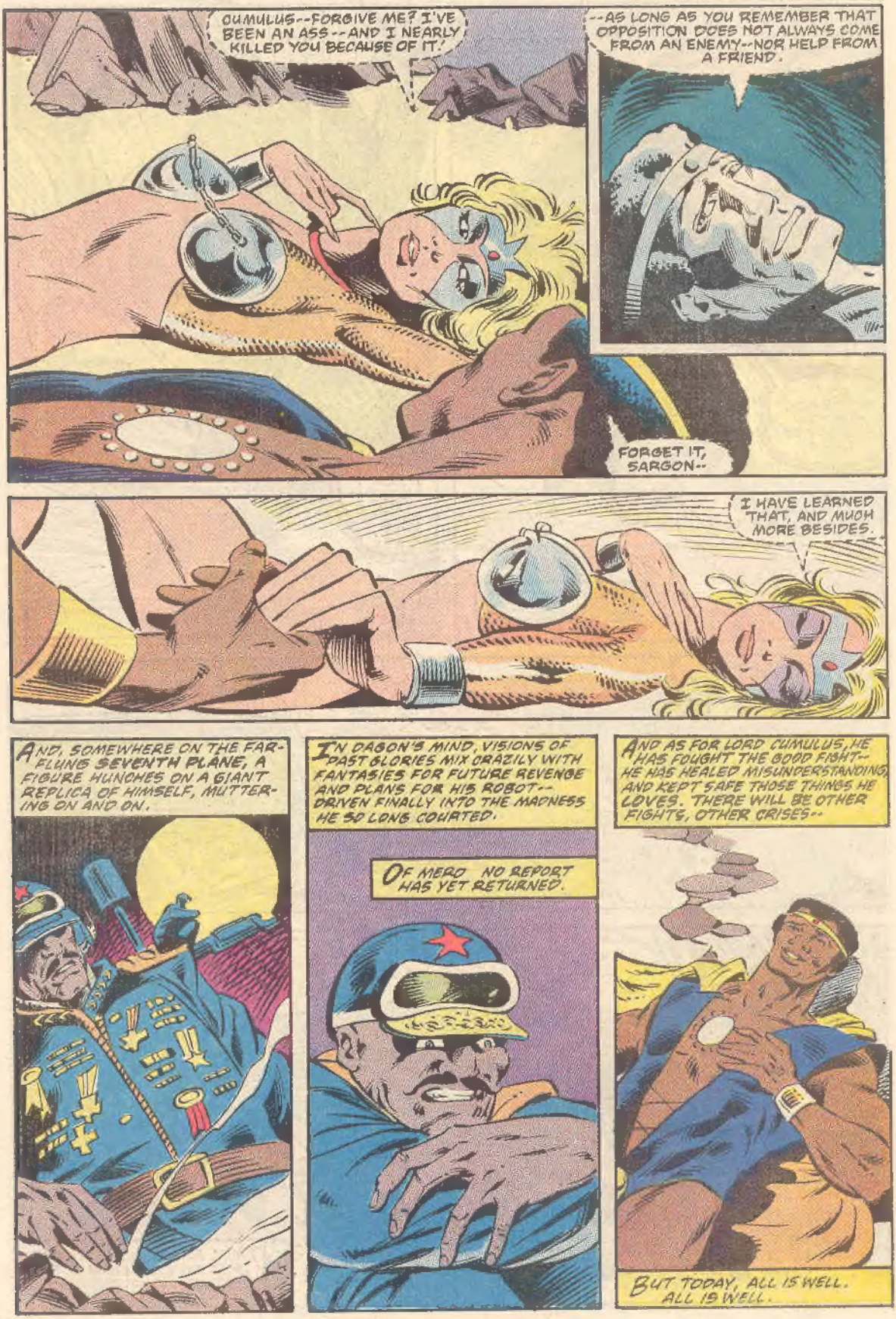
YOU JABBER AND DO NOTHING! BAD TACTICS!
YOU FRIGHTENED MY SPAWN FOR THAT YOU SHALL KNOW FEAR BEFORE YOU FEEL THE HEAT OF DEATH
I KNOW FEAR? DEATH I KNOW FULL WELL.
CHUK
RAAARR
- BUT NEVER FEAR
NOW, YLEM, MY POWER RENEWS ITSELF!
NOW I'M NO LONGER DIRECTED TOWARD HEALING GARGON
GOT THE LITTLE STINGER STILL DIES!
SHE SHALL NOT!
BY HE WHO DREAMS
GARGON - TO ME
NO NEED TO TELL ME TWICE!

ALL RIGHT, THERE IS A WAY TO END THIS WITH ONE BOLD STROKE, SARGON. ARE YOU WITH ME?
ALL THE WAY MY LORD
GOOD. YOUR LITTLE SOJOURN IN AMNION-SPACE WILL HAVE BUILT UP IN YOU ONE POWER SURGE AT LEVELS APPROACHING MINE. IT FADES FAST, SO WE MUST STRIKE TOGETHER.
READY-- NOW!
"AGAIN!"
"AND AGAIN!"
"MY LORD, I DON'T THINK I CAN--!"


"YOU MUST! AGAIN!"
NO! NOT BACK IN! YOU CANNOT DO THIS!
"HE'S--FALLING, MY--LORD--!"
I WON'T FORGET THIS, COLD ONES!
"AND HIS SPAWN--TOO! WE... HAVE..."

DON'T FADE ON ME NOW MY LADY! I KNOW THE SURGE IS FADING!
JOIN--JUST ONE LAST--TIME, TO SEAL THE--ENTRANCE--!


WE ARE --DONE MY LADY.
THEN, FOR A LONG WHILE THERE IS SILENCE, AS EVEN THE VICTORS LIE VANQUISHED BY THEIR EXERTIONS.
21


CUMULUS--FORGIVE ME? I'VE BEEN AN ASS--AND I NEARLY KILLED YOU BECAUSE OF IT.
--AS LONG AS YOU REMEMBER THAT OPPOSITION DOES NOT ALWAYS COME FROM AN ENEMY--NOR HELP FROM A FRIEND.
FORGET IT, SARGON--
I HAVE LEARNED THAT, AND MUCH MORE BESIDES.
AND, SOMEWHERE ON THE FAR-FLUNG SEVENTH PLANE, A FIGURE HUNCHES ON A GIANT REPLICA OF HIMSELF, MUTTERING ON AND ON.
IN DAGON'S MIND, VISIONS OF PAST GLORIES MIX CRAZILY WITH FANTASIES FOR FUTURE REVENGE AND PLANS FOR HIS ROBOT--DRIVEN FINALLY INTO THE MADNESS HE SO LONG COURTED.
OF MERO NO REPORT HAS YET RETURNED.
AND AS FOR LORD CUMULUS, HE HAS FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT--HE HAS HEALED MISUNDERSTANDING, AND KEPT SAFE THOSE THINGS HE LOVES. THERE WILL BE OTHER FIGHTS, OTHER CRISES--
BUT TODAY, ALL IS WELL. ALL IS WELL.

ESPECIALLY warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Well, it's been quite a while since our last **Warp Special,** but seeing as how we received quite a bit of mail on it, I think we should take this opportunity to share some of our readers' thoughts in re: **Warp Special** #1: Chaos, Prince of Madness.

Dear Peter, Howard, George, Janice and Mike:

Thank you for Warp Special #1. It is one of the finest constructed comics I have had the pleasure to read and collect.

Artwise, I'm a Howard Chaykin fan. His stylistic approach, innovative camera angles, and pacing make for a pleasant read. Likewise, it is hard to find an artist/inker that truly complements Howard. George Freeman has done just that, and I am looking forward to another team-up of the two.

It is interesting to see how Freeman has improved over Captain Canuck, a comic I had a hard time finding, because of very spotty distribution. I hope he's got something coming for you guys, like maybe the return of Captain Canuck.

Peter, I cannot believe how your writing is improving. This was a very entertaining story to read. I especially liked the tribute to Siegel and Schuster, and their Kryptonian creation, as well as the enigmas posted by Kayo.

Further, I liked this incarnation of Lord Cumulus, and prefer it to David Carson. Cumulus seems more sure of himself, almost cocky. Again, I liked that. Warp (and the Specials) is becoming my favorite comic book from the First line. Keep up the very entertaining work.

Charles B. Cockett, Jr.
353 McComb Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming
82007

Dear People,

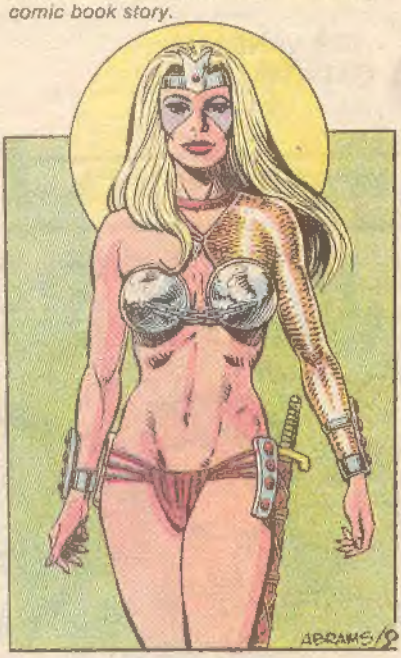
I have to agree with reader consensus that the encounter with our first character, David Carson, was far too brief. Oh, well, no use crying over dead people. This brings us to the action. This is a very important part of a comic book — the big selling point, I guess. But it would be nice if just once the script could carry a book all the way through without any action.

In the second issue of Warp, Valaria refers to a tree as one of her children. How is that possible? Her powers are sexual by nature. No way could she have made it with a tree, since trees are neither male nor female. Please explain your way out of that one. If you can.

Joel H. Ivy
3112 S. Morgan
Chicago, IL 60608

No problem, Joel. I can explain it by using one of the most popular and disgusting contrivances known in the comics medium: the fast-forward hype. The true nature of Valaria's powers is explained in great detail in, gasp, **Warp Special** *#3, written by* **Peter Gillis,** *pencilled by* **George Freeman,** *and on sale in, oh, four or five months.*

As for your initial comments. Let me point out the fact that comics is a collaborative medium, with the artwork and the script blending together in a balance in order to tell a smooth and coherent story. Comics is also a visual medium: if you can't think visually, you can't write comics. Having the script dominate the art in any way would provide for an off-balance and boring comic book story.



Dear Warp crew,

I very much enjoyed your first Warp Special. I like the way Peter Gillis uses expletives in his scripting. You don't often see them used in any other comic books.

I love how sexually attractive Valaria is!!! She's one of the most sensual female characters in comics — right up there with Vampirella, Modesty Blaise, and Tamara (from Starslayer). I also love her gloveless middle fingers. That was a really nice, subtle, change. Please keep Valaria as long as you can.

I was so impressed with the Warp Special that I actually took time out to write you this letter. I very much enjoyed the combination of Howard Chaykin's pencils and George Freeman's inks and colors. Chaykin's artwork was at least as vibrant as Frank Brunner's art. I was glad to see that Chaykin used a visual style that was quite similar to Brunner's — the use of superimposed images and full page drawings.

You guys are doing a fine job. Keep it up.

Kenneth Pollock
8 Pine Hill Bend
Ballston Lake, NY 12019

Dear Warped Ones:

To say I liked Warp Special #1 would be an understatement. Unfortunately, I had to read it twice to fully understand what was going on. I like books that make me do that!

At first, I was set out not to like the art. Howard Chaykin . . . good. Someone else inking Howard Chaykin . . . not so good. Then I saw the art . . . Let's just say it was nearly impossible to hate something so good. (I nearly jumped for joy when I saw the ad for American Flagg! At least I got to see some art pencilled and inked by Howard. One page is better than none . . . for the time being.)

The story by Peter Gillis was . . . strange. But what else would you expect Chaos's origin to be? I can hardly wait to read Warp Special #2. By the way, will WS be a quarterly book, or will it stop with #2?

Kevin T. Brown
7946F W. Lawrence
Avenue
Norridge, IL 60656

The **Warp Specials** *will be published whenever we feel it would be a good time to break our on-going storyline with a deep, long look at the past. In the original adaptation, we established the fact that there's at least 35,000 years of prior history, and at least some very important things have been left unrevealed. Setting up an earlier Cumulus and the land of Cynosure only expands upon these possibilities.*

We've also got this mini-series idea floating around involving the breakup of Sargon and her sister Valaria . . .

Dear Mike, Peter, Howard, George, and Janice:

Before I actually get into how I felt about the first Warp Special, I'd like to bring up two more "holes" that Editor Gold may have missed.

First of all, how did the Star-Seed of Chaos come to be travelling through the void? This in itself would seem to indicate that there is more to Chaos' story than you deemed to write about.

Then there is the ending you came up with for the story. As Lord Cumulus died, he released a shower of Star-Seeds. This he did in the hope that one of them would one day take root and he would be reborn. Very logical. Very believable. All in all, just fine.

But what if more than one seed took root? Would there now be more than one Lord Cumulus? A very perplexing question with a very simple answer. The essence of Lord Cumulus was not connected in any one seed but was instead spread out equally among the many seeds so that he would have a much better chance of being reborn. When one seed finally took root, a mental signal was sent out gathering up the rest of Cumulus' essence. This ensured that his consciousness was not divided up among who knows how many bodies each dwelling in who knows how many different worlds.

As for the Special itself, I enjoyed it very much. In it you explained several things I had been wondering about and you explained them in a way that makes sense. To me at least. So, thank you for this special and I eagerly await your next.

Douglas Nicholson
1630 West Louden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19141

Dear Mike:

Warp Special #1 is the closest First Comics has come so far to a fully satisfying book. Chaykin supplies the kind of imaginative design work that can often overcome an inadequate storyline. Gillis, particularly freed from Gordon and St. Edmund's baggage, tells an interesting story with his usual flair. It lames out towards the end only as the necessities of the Warp continuity come into play.

George Freeman's color and inks round out Howard's pencils nicely. They seem complete and polished, yet the vitality of the Simonsonesque line work is allowed to shine through.

Dr. Phillip S. Kott
Rockville, MD

A BIG THANK YOU to fellow Chicagoan **Marc Silvestri** for taking time out from his busy King Conan schedule over at Marvel for penciling this issue. It was a gas, Marc, and we're looking forward to doing it again sometime real soon.

NEXT MONTH, back in our regular **Warp** series, we begin the Second Saga, and we've got **Jerry Bingham** on board to help us out! Jerry will be joining **Peter Gillis** and **Mike Gustovich** in telling the exciting new adventures of Cumulus, Chaos, Sargon and company ... and if you think we were boxed in at the end of **Warp** #9, you've got a hell of a ride ahead of you.

Also, in **Warp** #10, we meet an important new character in the Warp universe. His name is Outrider, and he'll

be found in the back eight pages of the next several issues as we get him back to the land of Fen-Ra.

THE THIRD Warp Special, as noted above, features the work of the oft aforementioned **Gillis** and **Freeman,** is something of a sequel to the first **Warp Special,** features Valaria and, in the title role, Prince Chaos. You'll see it in about four months ... and we'll see you back in **Warp** in thirty days.

— Mike Gold

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